

Message Text

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AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 07184

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT GW

SUBJECT: GUENTHER VAN WELL: WHAT HIS COMING PROMOTION
TO STATE SECRETARY MEANS

SUMMARY: THE PROSPECTIVE PROMOTION OF GUENTHER VAN WELL TO THE NUMBER TWO POST IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE WILL BRING ONE OF THE FRG'S ABLEST CAREER DIPLOMATS TO THE FORE OF GERMAN POLICY MAKING. WE CAN EXPECT VAN WELL, A PRAGMATIC ACTIVIST, TO TRY TO PUT HIS STAMP ON GERMAN EUROPEAN POLICY AND TO TRY TO INCREASE GERMAN INFLUENCE ON EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS AND POLICIES (BOTH EAST AND WEST). HE MAY ALSO SEEK TO MAKE THE FRG'S WEIGHT FELT IN OTHER AREAS, ESPECIALLY IN THOSE WHICH HE THINKS ARE IMPORTANT TO THE STABILITY OF EUROPE. HE WILL NOT ALWAYS BE EASY FOR US TO DEAL WITH, THOUGH HE HAS CLOSE TIES TO THE US AND A LONG ASSOCIATION WITH US. HIS ACTIVIST APPROACH TOWARD FOREIGN POLICY PUSHES HIM TOWARD TAKING INITIATIVES, WHICH IS NOT ALWAYS WHAT WE WANT OF THE FRG EITHER IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS OR ON BERLIN, HIS TWO MAIN AREAS OF INTEREST TO DATE. IT MAY ALSO CAUSE HIM TO GIVE ELECTIVE BRIEFING. HIS ESPOUSAL OF A EUROPEAN IDENTITY HAS PROBLEM POTENTIAL, ALTHOUGH VAN WELL HAS, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, SUPPORTED THE TRADITIONAL GERMAN POLICY OF SEEKING THE GREATEST POSSIBLE IDENTITY BETWEEN EUROPEAN AND US POSITIONS. VAN WELL RECOGNIZES THE NEED FOR CLOSE AND HARMONIOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND FRG. WHILE HE WILL NOT HESITATE TO ADVOCATE GERMAN NATIONAL INTERESTS, HE
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SHOULD PROVE TO BE AN EFFECTIVE BRIDGE ON ANY ISSUE IN WHICH HE PERCEIVES THE US AND GERMAN INTERESTS TO BE THE SAME. END SUMMARY.

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1. GUENTHER VAN WELL, SCHEDULED TO BECOME STATE SECRETARY IN THE FRG FOREIGN MINISTRY ON MAY 1, HAS RISEN FAST IN THE GERMAN FOREIGN SERVICE, ESPECIALLY IN THE LAST TEN YEARS, DURING WHICH HE WILL HAVE COME FROM OFFICE DIRECTOR TO STATE SECRETARY IN ONE LONG BONN ASSIGNMENT. HIS PERSONAL ABILITY, AS WELL AS THE CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECTS HE WAS HANDLING (BERLIN, GDR, USSR, US AND EC -- THE MAIN POLICY INTERESTS OF ANY GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER) HAVE ACCOUNTED FOR HIS SUCCESS.

2. VAN WELL IS THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH THE U.S. AND OUR POLICY PRIORITIES. HE SPENT THREE MONTHS VISITING THE U.S. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1963 AS A LEADER GRANTEE. HE SERVED IN NEW YORK FOR FIVE YEARS IN THE 1950'S IN

THE OFFICE OF THE GERMAN PERMANENT OBSERVER AT THE UN
AND RETURNED IN 1962 FOR ONE YEAR AS A FELLOW AT
H HARVARD'S CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. HIS WIFE IS
AN AMERICAN; HIS TWO CHILDREN WERE BORN IN THE U.S.
EACH YEAR THEY ALL SPEND THEIR SUMMER VACATION ON CAPE

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COD. HE LEARNED ENGLISH IN A BRITISH PRISONER OF WAR CAMP AND HAS AMERICANIZED IT OVER THE YEARS TO THE POINT WHERE IT IS DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH HIM FROM A NATIVE SPEAKER. WHILE STATIONED IN BONN HE HAS ALWAYS HAD FRIENDS IN THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

3. VAN WELL'S BACKGROUND IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAS EXPOSED HIM TO THE PRIORITIES OF U.S. POLICY TOWARD EUROPE. AS CHIEF OF THE OFFICE OF BERLIN AND ALL-GERMAN AFFAIRS (1967-71), HE PARTICIPATED IN THE BONN GROUP AND INTERACTED WITH HIS AMERICAN, BRITISH AND FRENCH PARTNERS ON ALMOST A DAILY BASIS AS THE ALLIED NEGOTIATED THE BERLIN QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIETS. HIS PROMOTION TO DEPUTY POLITICAL DIRECTOR DID NOT REMOVE HIM FROM THIS EXPOSURE TO U.S. POLICY PRIORITIES; IT ONLY WIDENED HIS HORIZONS TO INCLUDE EASTERN EUROPE. THESE HORIZONS WERE WIDENED FURTHER IN 1972 WHEN HE WAS PROMOTED TO POLITICAL DIRECTOR FOR DEPARTMENT III (THE THIRD WORLD) AND AGAIN IN 1973, WHEN HE ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEPARTMENT II (EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA, THE USSR, UN AFFAIRS, AND DISARMAMENT

POLICY).

4. AS CHIEF OF ALL GERMAN AFFAIRS IN THE HEYDAY OF OST-POLITIK, VAN WELL OCCUPIED A VITAL AND SENSITIVE POSITION IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE. DURING THIS TIME, VAN WELL SUPPORTED EGON BAHR'S PHILOSOPHY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
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OSTPOLITIK, BEING ONE OF A VERY LIMITED NUMBER OF FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS WHO DID SO. HOWEVER, VAN WELL'S SUPPORT OF THIS POLICY PROBABLY DID NOT REFLECT ANY CONVICTION ON HIS PART. RATHER, HE ABLY RECOGNIZED WHAT

POLICY THE BRANDT GOVERNMENT FAVORED AND TAILORED HIS VIEWS ACCORDINGLY.

5. VAN WELL'S ABILITY TO CHANGE WITH THE TIMES IS REFLECTED IN THE GOOD RELATIONSHIP HE HAS ESTABLISHED WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER, THE MAN WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR VAN WELL'S LATEST PROMOTION. AS CAN BE SEEN IN HIS ARTICLE IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF EUROPA ARCHIV, VAN WELL WAS ADVOCATING A HARDER POLICY TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE NEED FOR THE FRG TO GAIN INCREASED ACCEPTANCE OF ITS ABILITY TO REPRESENT WEST BERLIN INTERNATIONALLY. THE RATHER LEGALISTIC POSITION REFLECTED IN THIS ARTICLE WAS CLOSE TO THE VIEWS OF GENSCHER, WHO TOOK PAINS TO MAKE PUBLIC HIS AGREEMENT WITH THE THRUST OF VAN WELL'S THOUGHTS. THE CHANCELLOR WAS CLEARLY ANNOYED BY PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLE, WHICH SUGGESTED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF FRG-SOVIET RELATIONS UNLESS THE SOVIETS MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONCESSION ON THE BERLIN ISSUES. FOR MONTHS MANY OF VAN WELL'S CLOSE ASSOCIATES DISCOUNTED RUMORS OF HIS PROMOTION TO STATE SECRETARY, BELIEVING THAT THE CHANCELLOR WOULD NEVER ACQUIESCE. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN WHAT BROUGHT ABOUT THE RECONCILIATION, BUT WE HAVE NOTED WITH INTEREST BACKGROUND ARTICLES AFTER VAN WELL'S RECENT CONSULTATIONS IN MOSCOW SUGGESTING THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE MIGHT BE PREPARED TO SET ASIDE THE BERLIN CONTROVERSY FOR NOW IN ORDER TO MAKE PROGRESS IN OTHER ASPECTS OF FRG-SOVIET RELATIONS.

6. AS POLITICAL DIRECTOR, VAN WELL HAS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A "EUROPEAN PERSONALITY." HE SINCERELY BELIEVES THAT WESTERN EUROPE HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CAPABILITY OF MAKING A DISTINCTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. AT THE SAME TIME, HE HAS AVOIDED CHAMPIONING DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPE'S IDENTITY IN OPPOSITION TO THE U.S. VAN WELL HAS DIRECTED CONSIDERABLE GERMAN EFFORT AT BUILDING A COMMON EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY THROUGH EC POLITICAL COOPERATION. IN LINE WITH HIS VIEWS ON AN EUROPEAN IDENTITY, HE HAS ATTEMPTED TO EXTEND POLITICAL COOPERATION TO INCLUDE SECURITY SUBJECTS. HIS LECTURES ON A ROLE FOR EUROPE IN THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE FAMILIAR TO THE POLITICAL DIRECTORS OF THE OTHER EC MEMBERS. NOTHING IN HIS BACKGROUND SUGGESTS THAT HE HAS ANY GREAT FAMILIARITY WITH ECONOMICS OR ANY SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EC.

7. VAN WELL'S EXPOSURE TO THE THIRD WORLD HAS BEEN

LIMITED. HE SERVED IN TOKYO IN THE MID-'60'S
AND HE PROBABLY HAD SOME EXPOSURE TO THIRD WORLD
QUESTIONS DURING HIS TOUR IN NEW YORK. HIS RESPONSIBIL-
ITY FOR THIRD WORLD QUESTIONS IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE IN
BONN WAS BRIEF. PERHAPS HIS MOST TELLING EXPERIENCE IN

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THIS AREA CAME DURING HIS TOUR AS POLITICAL DIRECTOR OF DEPARTMENT II, WHEN HE PARTICIPATED IN TRYING TO FORGE AN EC POLICY ON QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE THIRD WORLD. UNDER HIS SPONSORSHIP, THE FRG HAS CONSISTENTLY ADVOCATED EXPANDING POLITICAL COOPERATION TO INCLUDE THIRD WORLD ISSUES, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHICH CONCERN EUROPEAN STABILITY (MIDDLE EAST, CYPRUS) OR THOSE WHICH OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY TO THE EC TO ENHANCE ITS SOLIDARITY IN NON-CONTROVERSIAL AREAS (COOPERATION WITH ASEAN). HIS ATTITUDES ON THIRD WORLD ISSUES THUS APPEAR TO BE GROUNDED MORE IN HIS PERCEPTIONS OF EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY NEEDS THAN IN ANY DETAILED APPRECIATION OF THIRD WORLD PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, IN HIS NEW POSITION HE WILL PROBABLY MASTER THOSE PROBLEMS AS SWIFTLY AS HE HAS OTHERS.

8. VAN WELL HAS SUCH STRONG PERSONAL TIES WITH THE U.S. THAT HE APPEARS AT TIMES ALMOST DELIBERATELY TO DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM U.S. POLICY. DURING THE TIME, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT HE AND EGON BAHR WORKED ON OSTPOLITIK, HE IS KNOWN TO HAVE MADE SCORNFUL REMARKS ABOUT THE INABILITY OF THE U.S. TO UNDERSTAND OSTPOLITIK. WHILE FRIENDLY TOWARD AMERICANS, HE HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN FULLY FRANK IN HIS BRIEFINGS ON THE FRG'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE USSR. HE HAS, HOWEVER, OFTEN GIVEN US GOOD BASIC INSIGHTS INTO GENERAL GERMAN POLICY THINKING. HE HAS HAD TO BE REMINDED AT TIMES THAT THE ALLIES HAVE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN BERLIN WHICH CAN BE AFFECTED BY FRG/USSR RELATIONS. THUS, HE REFLECTS THE GROWING GERMAN READINESS TO STRESS THE FRG'S OWN INTERESTS AND

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OBJECTIVES WHILE STILL MAINTAINING CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE DOES NOT ALWAYS COMPLY WHEN WE WISH FULL AND URGENT GERMAN COOPERATION WITH OUR IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES, BUT HE PROVIDES US WITH AN

APPRECIATION OF WHERE THE FRG STANDS AND WHERE OUR PROBLEMS LIE.

9. VAN WELL IS AMBITIOUS AND, PERHAPS, VAIN. ALL, SLENDER, BLOND WITH TOUCHES OF LIGHT GRAY, HE LOOKS AS HE WERE TYPE CAST BY HOLLYWOOD FOR THE ROLE OF GERMAN DIPLOMAT. HIS AMBITION AND PRAGMATISMDRIVE HIM TO ACTIVIST POLICIES AND TO PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN TRYING TO RESOLVE ISSUES AND TO ADVANCE HIS OWN CONCEPTS ENERGETICALLY. HE HAS AN EXCELLENT GRASP OF BUREAUCRATIC ESSENTIALS AND IS ABLE TO MANEUVER ISSUES SWIFTLY ON THE MOST FAVORABLE TRACK. HE LIKES TO MAKE HIS PERSONAL MARK ON ISSUES. THIS COULD AT TIMES LEAD HIM TO EXCESSIVE ACTIVISM, BUT NOT TO THE POINT WHERE HE WOULD COUNTER THE RATHER MORE CAUTIOUS INSTINCTS OF HIS CHIEF AND PATRON, THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

10. IN SUMMARY: THE PROMOTION OF VAN WELL TO STATE SECRETARY WILL PUT A MAN WHO KNOWS AND UNDERSTANDS THE US WELL IN THE FRONT OFFICE OF THE AUSWAERTIGES AMT. THIS IS HIS GREATEST STRENGTH FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW. HE IS PRECONDITIONED BY HIS PERSONAL AND OFFICIAL EXPOSURE TO THE US TOWARD SYMPATHY FOR OUR POLICY OBJECTIVES. HE HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT HE HAS THE ABILITY TO PRESENT, DEFEND AND IMPLEMENT HIS POLICY VIEWS IN AN EFFECTIVE MANNER. HIS CHIEF WEAKNESSES ARE HIS ACTIVISM AND AMBITION, BOTH OF WHICH CAN LEAD HIM TO ESPOUSE WHATEVER POLICY HE BELIEVES IS IN FAVOR AT THE MOMENT. THEY ALSO TEND TO KEEP VAN WELL IN THE CENTER OF THINGS, WHICH IN TURN SERVES HIS CAREER INTERESTS. AS WE HAVE REPORTED, WE SHOULD EXPECT THE FRG'S FOREIGN POLICY TO BECOME MORE ASSERTIVE. CONFIDENTIAL

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FURTHERMORE, AS GERMAN POLICY HORIZONS WIDEN, WE MUST EXPECT THAT THERE WILL BE DISAGREEMENTS WHERE PREVIOUSLY THERE WERE NONE. VAN WELL'S PROMOTION WILL ACCELERATE THESE TRENDS. HE WILL BE A VOCAL PROPONENT OF GERMAN VIEWS -- AN ALLY, BUT NOT A SUBSERVIENT ONE.

11. THUS, WE LOOK ON VAN WELL'S PROMOTION WITH SOME MIXED FEELINGS. WE BELIEVE ON BALANCE THAT HIS APPOINTMENT SHOULD BE AN ASSET TO PROMPT AND EFFECTIVE CONSULTATION ON US AND FRG POLICIES IN MANY AREAS, BUT WE CANNOT EXPECT THAT HE WILL CONSISTENTLY SUPPORT THE POLICIES THAT WE WOULD WISH OR ALWAYS COORDINATE AS FULLY AS WE MIGHT REGARD AS DESIRABLE. STOESEL

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